

Message Text

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43

ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 NEA-10 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

CIAE-00 NSAE-00 (ISO) W

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R 211100Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6202

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NOUAKCHOTT 2029

3. ETHNICITY. MAURITANIAN ETHNICITY IS DIFFICULT TO UNTANGLE UNDER BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES. IT IS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT WITH ANY ACCURACY LOYALTY OF ETHNIC/CULTURAL/LANGUAGE GROUPS IN EVENT OF DISORDERLY SUCCESSION. THERE ARE THREE MAJOR "ETHNIC" GROUPS IN MAURITANIA, EACH OF WHICH FORMS ROUGHLY A THIRD OF POPULATION: (A) MOORS WHO SPEAK HASSANIA ARABIC AND LOOK CULTURALLY TO ARAB WORLD (B) AFRICANS OR BLACKS WHO SPEAK ONE OR MORE AFRICAN LANGUAGES(AND INCREASINGLY AMONG THE YOUNGER BLACKS SOME HASSANIA), BUT WHO LOOK CULTURALLY TO SUBSAHARA AFRICA, AND (C) MIXED GROUP RESULTING FROM INTER-MARRIAGE BETWEEN MOORS AND AFRICANS OR FORMER SLAVES OF MOORISH FAMILIES WHO ARE LINGUISTICALLY AND CULTURALLY MOORS (ALBEIT SECOND CLASS MOORS) BUT ARE RACIALLY BLACK AFRICANS. SHOULD IT BE NECESSARY FOR THIS THIRD GROUP TO CHOOSE SIDES BETWEEN MOORS AND AFRICANS, IT IS NOT CLEAR WHICH SIDE MAJORITY WOULD CHOOSE. SAHARAN CRISIS IS NOT BELIEVED TO HAVE SUBSTANTIALLY EXACERBATED RELATIONS BETWEEN AFRICANS AND MOORS; RATHER IT HAS CONFIRMED EXISTING TENSIONS. SURFACE HARMONY CONTINUES BETWEEN TWO GROUPS. IN PARTICULAR, WE HAVE NOT NOTED ANY AFRICAN-MOOR CONFLICT IN MILITARY SERVICES. NEVERTHELESS, SUB-SURFACE TENSIONS HAVE EXISTED FOR MANY YEARS, AND DRAWN-OUT SAHARAN CAMPAIGN COULD HAVE EFFECT OF BRINGING THESE TENSIONS TO FORE. WE ARE UNABLE TO COMMENT AUTHORITATIVELY ON SOCIAL/ETHNIC POSITION OF THE

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REGUIBAT. ACCURATE STATISTICS ON THEIR NUMBERS IN VICINITY OF NOUAKCHOTT ARE NOT AVAILABLE, ALTHOUGH TOTAL IS THOUGHT TO BE SMALL. SOME OF REGUIBAT WHO WERE ARRESTED AFTER JUNE 8 ATTACK ON NOUAKCHOTT WERE

SUBSEQUENTLY RELEASED. (FOR SAHARAN ATTITUDES ON RELATIONS WITH MAURITANIANS AND FUTURE OF SAHARA SEE 75 NOUAKCHOTT A-89). WE DO NOT KNOW IF THERE IS CONSENSUS AMONG SO-CALLED "BLACK MOORS" ON SAHARA QUESTION. AS IN CASE OF MOORS AND AFRICANS, WE SUSPECT THAT MAJORITY OF BLACK MOORS SUPPORT, HOWEVER UNENTHUSIASTICALLY, OULD DADDAH'S POLICY ON SAHARA. SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF BLACK MOORS LIVE IN SOUTHERN PART OF MAURITANIA. ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT COMMENT ON INTENSITY OF THEIR CONTACT WITH NON-ARABIC SPEAKING BLACKS, WE KNOW THEIR INTERACTIONS WITH BLACKS ARE FAIRLY FREQUENT.

4. MILITARY AID. PROJECTED TRANSFER OF ARMS FROM JORDAN TO MAURITANIA IS SO SMALL THAT IT WILL HAVE NO APPRECIABLE EFFECT ON MAURITANIA'S ABILITY TO DEFEND ITSELF. FULL EXTENT OF MOROCCAN AID TO MAURITANIA PROPER AND MAURITANIAN ZONE OF WESTERN SAHARA (TIRIS EL GHARBIYA) IS NOT KNOWN. LARGE QUANTITY OF MILITARY SUPPLIES FLOWN INTO MAURITANIA BY C-130S LAST FALL AND WINTER HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT MAURITANIA AND TIRIS EL GHARBIYA. WE DO NOT KNOW TOTAL QUANTITY OF THIS MATERIAL NOR DO WE KNOW WHAT PROPORTION IS NOW IN MAURITANIA PROPER AND WHAT AMOUNT IS IN TIRIS EL GHARBIYA. TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, MOROCCAN TROOPS ARE CONFINED TO BIR MOGHREIN AND JUST OUTSIDE DAKHLA. IN ADDITION, THERE ARE MOROCCAN MILITARY ADVISERS IN NOUAKCHOTT AND POSSIBLY IN NOUADHIBOU. IN ANY EVENT MOROCCAN AND JORDANIAN MILITARY AID CONSTITUTES ONLY SMALL FRACTION OF NEW MILITARY HARDWARE WHICH GIRM HAS PURCHASE AND IS CONTINUING TO PURCHASE FROM FRENCH AND FROM TOEHR SOURCES WITH EASTERN ARAB MONEY.

5. ARAB AID. OUR BEST ESTIMATE OF ARAB AID TO MAURITANIA IS CONTAINED IN NOUAKCHOTT 422. SUBSEQUENT TO THIS TELEGRAM SAUDI ARABIA SECRETLY OFFERED SUBSTANTIAL CONFIDENTIAL

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GRANT AID TO HELP UNDERWRITE SAHARAN CAMPAIGN. DUE TO PAUCITY AND TARDINESS OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS IN MAURITANIA (E.G. CENTRAL BANK FIGURES ON CAPITAL MOVEMENTS), WE BELIEVE USEFUL DATA CONCERNING SAUDI AND KUWAITI ECONOMIC AID TO MAURITANIA CAN BE OBTAINED MORE READILY FROM SAUDI AND KUWAITI STATISTICAL DOCUMENTS. HANDYSIDE

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